



Town of Groton, Connecticut

45 Fort Hill Road
Groton, CT 06340-4394
Town Clerk 860-441-6640
Town Manager
860-441-6630

Meeting Minutes

Representative Town Meeting

Moderator Scott L. Newsome, Representatives Karin Adams, Robert Bailey, Jeanne Baker, Joe Baril, Alicia T. Bauer, Rafael Burgos, Jr., Clarence Casper, Bobbi Jo Cini, Christine Conley, Lynn Crockett Hubbard, Susan Deane-Shinbrot, Jim Evans, Thomas A. Frickman, Bob Garcia, Nancy Gilly, Matthew G. Longino, Jim Loughlin, Emily Maher, Brandon Marley, Jackie Massett, Lisa McCabe, Bruce A. McDermott, Roscoe L. Merritt, Jim Nault, Kathy Neugent, Lian Obrey, Juliette M. Parker, Richard J. Pasqualini, Jr., Carolann Quinn, Dutcha Slieker-Hersant, Joan Steinfeld, Irma J. Streeter, James L. Streeter, Archie Swindell, Patricia Wagner, Lori A. Watrous, Gary Welles, Ivy R. Williams, and Jonathan Wilson.

Wednesday, November 9, 2016

7:30 PM

Groton Senior Center

REGULAR MEETING

Moderator Scott Newsome called the meeting to order at 7:38 p.m.

A. ROLL CALL

Members Present: Moderator Newsome, Rep. Adams, Rep. Bailey, Rep. Baker, Rep. Baril, Rep. Bauer, Rep. Burgos, Jr., Rep. Casper, Rep. Conley, Rep. Hubbard, Rep. Deane-Shinbrot, Rep. Evans, Rep. Frickman, Rep. Garcia, Rep. Slieker-Hersant, Rep. Gilly, Rep. Massett, Rep. McCabe, Rep. McDermott, Rep. Merritt, Rep. Nault, Rep. Obrey, Rep. Parker, Rep. Pasqualini Jr., Rep. Quinn, Rep. Streeter, Rep. Streeter, Rep. Watrous, Rep. Welles and Rep. Wilson

Members Absent: Rep. Cini, Rep. Longino, Rep. Loughlin, Rep. Maher, Rep. Marley, Rep. Neugent, Rep. Steinfeld, Rep. Swindell, Rep. Wagner and Rep. Williams

Moderator Newsome stated that 30 members were present and he declared a quorum.

Also present were Finance Director Cindy Landry, Superintendent of Schools Dr. Michael Graner, Human Resource Director Robert Zagami, Planning & Development Director Jon Reiner, Economic/Community Development Manager Paige Bronk, Town Clerk Betsy Moukawsher and Assistant Town Clerk Dawn Rahilly.

B. MOMENT OF SILENCE AND SALUTE TO THE FLAG

The members observed a moment of silence followed by the Salute to the Flag.

C. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF SEPTEMBER 14, 2016

A motion to approve the minutes was made by Rep. Pasqualini, seconded by Rep. Parker.

The vote on the approval of the minutes carried 28 in favor, 2 abstentions. Abstaining: Reps. Casper and Frickman.

D. CITIZENS' PETITIONS

None.

E. RECEPTION OF COMMUNICATIONS

Moderator Newsome stated that Reps. Cini, Maher, Neugent, Loughlin, Swindell and Wagner notified the Town Clerk of their absence.

Moderator Newsome mentioned the joint meeting of the RTM, Town Council and Town Manager to be held next Wednesday, November 16th, at 7 p.m. The purpose of this meeting is to begin discussion on the FYE 2018 budget. He noted the difficult budget session last year and is hoping this informal meeting will help all parties discuss their priorities and make the FYE 2018 budget process easier this year. The meeting will take place at the Groton Senior Center.

F. REPORT OF THE TOWN MANAGER**1. Financial report**

Reporting for Town Manager Mark Oefinger, Finance Director Cindy Landry reported that the Preliminary Fund Balance as of October 31, 2016 (unaudited) is approximately \$9.9 million. She reported the FYE 2017 General Contingency budget was appropriated at \$425,000 with a current balance of \$413,000. As of October 31st two transfers of \$12,000 have been approved. Pending RTM approval is a \$48,190 transfer for previously approved wage increases for United Steelworker employees that were not included in the FYE 2017 Adopted Budget. The Contingency balance after this transfer will be \$364,810. Ms. Landry reported the Capital Reserve balance as of October 31, 2016 is estimated at \$1.4 million (unaudited).

2. Monthly briefing

Finance Director Landry highlighted various items from the Town Manager's Monthly News report. She reminded members all Groton Town offices will be closed on Friday, November 11th in observance of Veteran's Day. She reported the Airport Development Zone application was sent to and received by the State of Connecticut's Department of Economic and Community Development. The zone would offer significant benefits to new and expanding companies, within a two-mile radius of the airport, that focus on manufacturing, research development, and other targeted sectors. Town of Groton Economic Development staff anticipates approval of the Airport Development Zone by the end of 2016. She announced sign-ups for the Town's annual holiday distribution of food and toys began on October 24th at Groton Human Services and will continue through November 23rd. Thanksgiving distribution will be held on November 18th and the December holiday distribution will be held on Friday, December 23rd. She noted attachment 1 is a list of items needed that can be dropped off at the Human Services building Monday-Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. The Groton-Mystic Emergency Services book signing, written by Town Historian and RTM member James Streeter and retired City of Groton Fire Captain William Tischer, will take place November 12th at Fitch High School, November 28th at Bill Memorial Library and December 10th at Par Four. The book covers all 23 of Groton's past and present emergency services departments. Copies of the book will be available for purchase at each event. She referred to attachment 5, the September and October 2016 update on Groton economic development projects. She referred to attachment 6, the State of Connecticut decision on the budgetary dispute between the Town and City of Highway budget for the 2016 Fiscal Year. Attachment 11 which is an invitation from the Groton Lodge of Elks for their annual Law Enforcement Night on November 19, 2016 at 6 p.m. Ms. Landry noted attachment 12 is a listing of vacancies on Groton board and agencies. For anyone interested, applications are available from the Town Clerk.

Responding to Rep. Wilson, Finance Director Cindy Landry anticipated Charter Revision expenses to be approximately \$7,000. Town Clerk Betsy Moukawsher outlined postage, overtime, supplies and legal ads placed in publications, as some of the expenses.

G. REPORT ON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Director of Planning and Development Services Jon Reiner outlined a number of the larger planning projects his department is currently involved with. He mentioned the Plan of Conservation & Development which is the long range planning document for the vision for the Town for the next 10-20 years. Adopted last June and effective October 1st, the document is available on their web page for those who are interested.

He stated that it will probably be another year before the re-writing of the zoning regulations are complete. They have just finished the most difficult and technical part which is the Water Resource Protection District. This protects the quality of Groton's drinking water. Mr. Reiner outlined three key stake holders as the Business Community, Groton Utilities and Environmental interests. He would like to see more input from the business community to ensure the regulations are not too strict for doing business in Groton and that they are balanced.

Mr. Reiner went on to explain Tax Increment Financing as another economic development tool and it's possible use in Groton in the future. He noted the State recently changed legislation making it easier for municipalities to use.

In conjunction with the Southeastern Council of Government, they are a participating on the joint land use study with the Navy Base. The purpose is to ensure communities and military installations have compatible uses so there are no conflicting land uses.

Economic/Community Development Manager Paige Bronk gave an update on economic development activities and initiatives. The list of updates are attached to the permanent record. He explained participation in a survey project with Great Blue Research. RTM members were given packets of material to review pertaining to this project. Great Blue Research will give a presentation on this project to the RTM in the future.

Mr. Bronk reported they were successful in securing a \$800,000 Community Block Grant award for affordable housing and are working in conjunction with the Groton Housing Authority.

A brochure is being developed to educate investors about different programs and incentives offered by the State, as well as on the local level. He discussed the website dedicated to economic development that is to be developed. It will assist in tracking and promoting business in Groton. The RFP will be issued in early December and they anticipate the website be completed no later than summer 2017.

Mr. Reiner reported that there is no activity on Electric Boat construction projects currently but there are projects in the future. He noted there is a lot of interest from regional and national developers that are looking at Groton with projects they are interested in pursuing.

In response to questions asked by Moderator Newsome, Mr. Reiner anticipates the zoning regulation re-work should be completed between 12-14 months. Much of it is predicated on the Zoning Commission process. On the status of the sale of the William Seely School, the current developer is still working on it. Mr. Reiner reiterated the RFP for the Economic Development website will go out in early December and the website will hopefully be completed by spring. Mr. Bronk anticipates the brochure will be completed in less than a month.

Mr. Reiner responded to questions from Rep. Streeter regarding economic development work in the City of Groton and the Groton Heights School. Mr. Reiner explained the property needs to be re-zoned and should only take a few months. They are currently working on it with the City of Groton.

Rep. Streeter questioned if the Town and City of Groton economic development and planning groups are working together. Mr. Bronk responded the City of Groton proposes to hire a part time economic development specialist but he does not know what they envision that position would do. He stated both the Town and City try to work together in the best interest in all of Groton.

Mr. Reiner gave an update on Central Hall in response to Rep. McDermott's question. They do not have a permit for building at this time. He gave an update on activity going on in Mystic.

Moderator Newsome asked Mr. Reiner where he sees the Grand List in May at budget time. Mr. Reiner responded he does not see any substantial differences but feels they have turned a corner. There are construction projects in the works that will have a moderate impact as well as a number of projects that will have a significant impact in the future.

H. REPORT OF THE SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

Superintendent of Schools Dr. Michael Graner expressed his gratitude the Groton 2020 plan was

passed by Groton voters. He explained the next steps, and assured the RTM he will frequently update the steps and progress over the next few months to keep the RTM and Town Council informed. If all goes as planned, the Middle School will open in 2020 and the Elementary Schools in 2020/2023.

The Federal Education Department awards blue ribbons to outstanding schools nationwide. Of three schools in Connecticut receiving this award, only one is an Elementary School. Dr. Graner was pleased to announce the Dr. Charles Barnum Elementary School received the Exemplary Achievement Blue Ribbon Award.

Fitch High School Marching Band won the New England Championship on October 29th and will be traveling to Giant Stadium to participate in the National U.S. Band Competition this weekend.

Rep. McDermott questioned what makes Charles Barnum School stand out. Dr. Graner responded that although they have the same curriculum and materials, what sets them apart is a very good culture. It exudes a climate that embraces each child in a loving, caring, but high expectation environment. They foster a great relationship with the parents as well.

Dr. Graner responded to Rep. McDermott by stating that they are using Charles Barnum School as a model for the entire school district.

Rep. McDermott also mentioned that Fitch High School's rating on Zillow is lower than surrounding towns. Dr. Graner explained it is frustrating because all organizations use different criteria for their rating, but he will look into it.

Moderator Newsome congratulated the Fitch High School Marching Band and the Dr. Charles Barnum School for their excellence.

I. LIAISON REPORTS

None.

J. COMMITTEE REPORTS

1. FINANCE - Chairman Quinn

Chairman Quinn read the minutes of the meeting held on November 9, 2016. The minutes are on file in the Town Clerk's office.

A motion to approve the minutes was made by Rep. Quinn, seconded by Rep. Conley and so voted unanimously.

Finance Director Landry addressed Rep. Bailey's question by explaining that when working on the FYE 2017 budget there were several contracts that had not been settled. The funds were put in to contingency to cover those contracts. This particular contract was settled at the very end of the fiscal year. The funds that are being transferred from Contingency to Public Works are the wage increases that were part of the contract.

Responding to Rep. Wilson, Finance Director Landry stated that the referral amount of \$48,190 equates to 2.25 % increase per the new contract for United Steelworkers.

2016-0236

FYE 2017 Contingency Transfer for United Steelworkers Wages

FYE 2017 CONTINGENCY TRANSFER FOR UNITED STEELWORKERS WAGES

A motion was made by Rep. Quinn, seconded by Rep. Pasqualini Jr., that this matter be Adopted.

The motion carried unanimously

2. COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT & SERVICES - Chairman Conley

No meeting, no report.

3. EDUCATION - Chairman Neugent

No meeting, no report

4. RECREATION - Chairman Wison

No meeting, no report.

5. PUBLIC SAFETY - Chairman McDermott

No meeting, no report.

6. PUBLIC WORKS - Chairman Deane-Shinbrot

No meeting, no report.

7. RULES & PROCEDURES - Chairman Massett

No meeting, no report.

K. BUDGET DISCUSSIONS

Responding to Rep. McDermott, Town Clerk Betsy Moukawsher stated that the contract is in the works for Electronic Voting and have authorization for two months of trial which will take place April/May 2017.

L. OTHER BUSINESS

Rep. Obrey mentioned the Groton Business Association is having their annual Christmas Parade to be held on Saturday, December 3rd. The tree lighting and visit by Santa will take place following the parade. If anyone has a truck or is interested in helping out please contact her or get details on the Groton Business Association web site.

M. ADJOURNMENT

A motion to adjourn was made by Moderator Newsome, seconded by Rep. Evans and so voted unanimously. Moderator Newsome adjourned the meeting at 8:44 p.m.

Attest:

*Betsy Moukawsher, Town Clerk
Clerk of the RTM*

Dawn G. Rahilly, Assistant Town Clerk